

**Washington State Board of Health  
Policy & Procedure**

**Policy Number:** 001

**Subject:** Identifying, Monitoring, and Communicating With The Legislature  
About Legislation Relevant to the State Board of Health

**Approved Date:** January 10, 2001

**Policy Statement:**

It is the policy of the Washington State Board of Health to monitor and communicate with the legislature on proposed legislation that has a direct impact on the Board's statutory powers and duties or that is directly related to one of the following Board Priority Topics:

1. Public Health Improvement
2. Environmental Justice
3. Health Disparities
4. Children's Health and Well Being
5. Communicable Disease Reporting and Control

**Lead Responsibility:**

The Senior Health Policy Manager will have lead responsibility under the supervision of the Executive Director to assure compliance with this policy and procedure.

**Procedure:**

All Board staff will routinely monitor legislative bill introductions, committee agendas and other legislative matters. The Executive Director, the Senior Health Policy Manager or another designated Board staff will attend all Department of Health bill reviews. Board staff will use this information to develop and maintain a matrix on bills of interest to the Board on the Board's website. This matrix will include:

1. Bill number
2. Prime sponsor
3. Status
4. Brief digest
5. Brief summary of the Board's potential interest
6. Any planned action the Board or its members may have directed staff to take.  
(The most common expected action is "monitor")
7. The Board staff monitoring the bill
8. The Board member(s) most interested in the bill

Board staff will meet by phone and/or in person weekly to review, update and revise the matrix. The Senior Health Policy Manager will update the matrix weekly by COB each Thursday.

**Process:**

Upon identification of a bill that ***contains a provision which conflicts with the Board's existing authority*** in a way that will duplicate state agency efforts, or complicate state programs, the following action should be taken by Board staff, in consultation with the Executive Director:

- Prepare a letter for the Board Chair's approval notifying the relevant House and Senate committee Chairs of the problem and suggesting a technical solution.

Upon identification of a bill that ***contains a policy or programmatic change*** that may run counter to the Board's intent or direction as stated in existing rule, or within a developing Board Priority Topic area, the following action should be taken by Board staff, in consultation with the Executive Director:

- Bring the matter to the attention of the Board Chair and the appropriate Board member sponsoring that Board Priority Topic via email. Include options and a recommendation on what action, if any, is needed by the Board.

Correspondence with legislative staff or members must be approved by the Executive Director or a Board Member. Such correspondence should routinely be copied and sent to the Office of the Secretary – Policy, Legislative, and Constituent Relations.

**Responsibility for Communicating with the Legislature:**

An individual Board member may speak or write to the legislature or they may ask that the Executive Director or any Board staff member speak or write for them on a particular piece of proposed legislation or other matters. In such cases, the speaker should clarify that such communications are from a single Board member or a group of Board members, but do not necessarily reflect the views of the entire Board.

The Board Chair may speak or write to the legislature or its staff recommending a specific amendment or other action on proposed legislation on behalf of the Board, so long as the Chair believes such position is generally consistent with the wishes of the majority of the Board. At the direction of the Chair, the Executive Director or any Board staff may transmit or delivery such communications.

**PDC Reporting:**

Any Board member or Board staff member, who addresses comments to the legislature or its staff on proposed legislation, ***relating to the Board***, must report such activity to the Board's Senior Health Policy Manager who must prepare a consolidated quarterly report on such activity as required by the Public Disclosure Commission according to 42.17.190 RCW.